

Historic Chatham in Kent is becoming the affordable out-of-London option for commuters

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Metro News Reporter

Tuesday 23 Aug 2022 11:00 am



49
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Seaside Chatham is a breath of fresh air for those leaving the capital (Picture: Alamy)

Chatham is inextricably linked to its royal dockyard, founded by Henry VIII, which built Royal Navy warships for more than 400 years.

Since its closure in 1984, the site has been transformed and now houses the restored Historic Dockyard Chatham, thousands of homes, a university campus, and a retail, sports and business hub.

The town centre and the area's flourishing creative sector are being boosted with funding from the government's Future High Streets and Levelling Up Funds, and various residential and commercial projects are in the pipeline.

Buyers used to **London** prices find it very affordable and accessible, both by rail and road.

Homes in the town centre are typically two-up, two-down Victorian terraces, and there are also conversions and purpose-built flats, and larger houses on the outskirts.

'We mostly see first-time buyers moving in from out of the area, often from London or Essex, whereas those who live in Medway try towns such as Rainham, which are regarded as more desirable,' says Mark Franklin of Robinson Michael & Jackson.

'Flats start at around the £140,000-£150,000 mark and two-bedroom houses are priced upwards from £220,000.'

What's new in the area?

St Mary's Island, on the former Royal Naval Dockyard site, has been transformed by Countryside in partnership with Homes England into a new mixed-tenure, 1,700 home community.

The final phase, called **Maritime Mews**, consists of one and two-bedroom apartments and three and four-bed houses. Apartments including open-plan kitchen/living/dining areas and balconies start from £260,000.

The Riverside Collection – the last 12 houses on St Mary's Island – launches shortly. The two four-bed and ten five-bed houses all overlook the River Medway and Upnor Castle.

Countryside Partnerships and Hyde are delivering 1,400 homes at nearby **Rochester Riverside**. One-bed apartments with private outside space and four-bed houses are left in the current phase, from £250,000 and £685,000 respectively.

More apartments and houses are for sale at **Persimmon's Colonial Wharf**, part of the old dockyard and close to Dockside Shopping Centre. They range from £220,500 for a one-bedroom flat to £470,000 for a four-bedroom townhouse.

Medway Development Company, Medway Council's own housing arm, is working on two developments, Garrison Point and Waterfront.

Garrison Point is a collection of 15 one and two-bed apartments and is due for completion at the end of the year.

They start from £212,000, available through Help to Buy and First Homes, the latter offering a 30% discount. One and two-bed apartments at **Waterfront** go on sale next month.

Later this year, **Annington** will be launching refurbished two, three and four-bed houses and apartments at Sovereign Gate, and this autumn St Arthur Homes releases 32 one and two-bed shared ownership apartments at **TopHat's Kitchener Barracks**, an innovative development of 3D modular homes, from £102,500 for 50% of £205,000.



What potential buyers need to know about Chatham

Average house price: £292,502

Average rent: £1,074 pcm

Council tax (Band D): £1,902.24

Commuting time to Zone 1: 42 mins to St Pancras Intl via HS1 trains; about 50 mins to Victoria or Cannon Street

Annual season ticket: From £5,444

Amenities: Morrisons, Asda Superstore, Tesco Extra; chains in the pedestrianised high street and Pentagon Shopping Centre; discount outlets, gym and cinema at Dockside Shopping Centre; Brook Theatre and Central Theatre; Lordswood Leisure Centre; Nucleus Arts Centre; Historic Dockyard Chatham is a top visitor attraction; Chatham Maritime Watersports Centre; restored Fort Amherst is Britain's biggest Napoleonic fortress

Open space: Capstone Farm Country Park; Great Lines Heritage Park; Tunbury Park; Victoria Gardens; Horsted Valley

Schools: Most state schools are judged as outstanding or good by Ofsted; three grammar schools

Crime: Below average

Who lives there? London leavers buying their first home

*Schools, crime and house price data supplied by **Zoopla**.*